

Timely and Helpful Books and other Resources

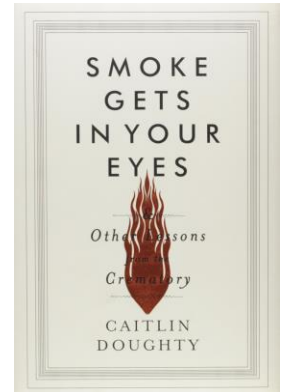
By Rebecca Taylor

Please send suggestions for books you've read to add to the list to: bectreks@aol.com

FUNERALS, FUNERALS HOMES, AND FUNERAL PLANNING

Smoke Gets in Your Eyes: And Other Lessons from the Crematory by Caitlin Doughty. Norton, hardcover, paperback, audiobook, e-book.

Most people want to avoid thinking about death, but Caitlin Doughty—a twenty-something with a degree in medieval history and a flair for the macabre—took a job at a crematory, turning morbid curiosity into her life's work. Thrown into a profession of gallows humor and vivid characters (both living and very dead), Caitlin learned to navigate the secretive culture of those who care for the deceased. Honest and heartfelt, self-deprecating and ironic, Caitlin's engaging style makes this otherwise taboo topic both approachable and engrossing. Now a licensed mortician with an alternative funeral practice, Caitlin argues that our fear of dying warps our culture and society, and she calls for better ways of dealing with death (and our dead).



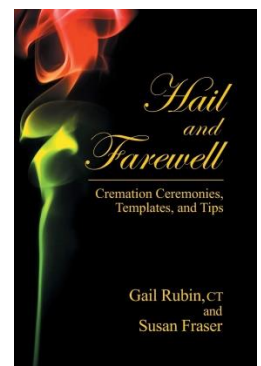
A Good Goodbye: Funeral Planning for Those Who Don't Plan to Die by Gail Rubin. Light Tree Press, paperback and e-book.

Provides the information, inspiration and tools to plan and implement creative, meaningful and memorable end-of-life rituals for people and pets. Just as talking about sex won't make you pregnant, talking about funerals won't make you dead - and your family will benefit from the conversation. Learn how to save money, reduce family conflict, and avoid stress at a time of grief.



Hail and Farewell: Cremation Ceremonies, Templates and Tips by Gail Rubin and Susan Fraser. Light Tree Press, paperback.

Thousands of families won't know what to do with their loved ones' cremated remains or how to create a meaningful memorial service. HAIL AND FAREWELL: Cremation Ceremonies, Templates and Tips provides all the answers. The book covers everything related to creating a meaningful memorial service with cremated remains: Why it's important to hold some sort of goodbye ceremony. Examples of different ways to scatter ashes - more than you'd think! Stories of creative memorial services in different settings to spark ideas. Templates to easily create meaningful memorial services.

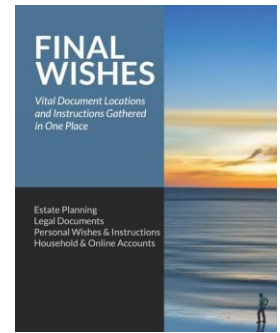


CHECKLISTS AND PLANNING DOCUMENTS

This particular “genre” has proliferated in the last few years and there are many, many versions available at online bookstores. These are the best I've found.

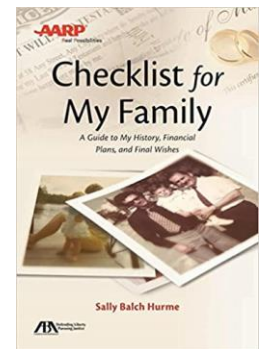
Final Wishes: Estate Planning • Legal Documents • Personal Wishes & Instructions • Household and Online Accounts Simple Start Guides, paperback.

This checklist estate planner gathers all your vital information in one place. Record the location of legal documents such as your will, your living will, names and addresses of friends and relatives, property deeds, insurance policies, checking and savings accounts, credit and debit cards, retirement savings in IRAs and 401ks and pensions, stocks, bonds, mutual funds, safe deposit box keys and contents, your mortgage and other loans' paperwork, your vehicles and their titles, business licenses and other documents for sole proprietors, your preferences about organ donation, instructions for burial or cremation and more.



ABA/AARP Checklist for My Family: A Guide to My History, Financial Plans and Final Wishes by Sally Balch Hurme. American Bar Association, paperback.

This book guides you through the process of gathering in one place your finances, legal documents, online accounts, wishes about medical care, and more. Plus it tells you what you need, why you need it, what's missing, and where to get it. This book is also a gift to your loved ones. It spares them stressful decisions and needless frustrations when you're ill or upon your death. And it presents them with your legacy, by providing specific knowledge of family history and recollections about your life, interests, and accomplishments. Whether you choose to gather this critical information in the book itself or through the forms available free online, you can easily customize and organize your information.



Get It Together: Organize Your Records So Your Family Won't Have To by Melanie Cullen and Shae Irving J.D. NOLO, paperback, spiral bound, e-book. (Ninth Edition to be released September, 2020)

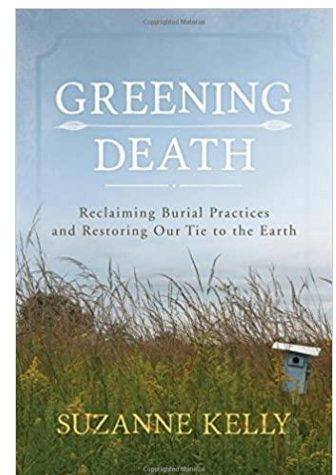
Provides a complete system for structuring and organizing your information and documents into a records binder. For each topic, you will find step-by-step instructions, helpful content, and rich resources. Do your loved ones know where to find your life insurance policies, online banking passwords, real estate deeds, or even your will? The updated 9th edition is reorganized to make it easier to get started. All forms are downloadable through a link printed in the book.



GREEN BURIAL AND OTHER ALTERNATIVES

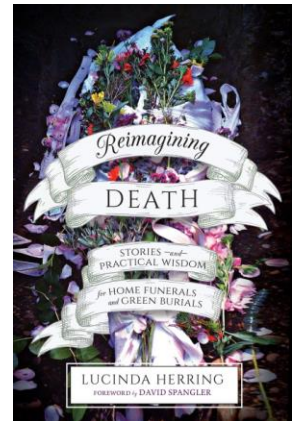
Greening Death: Reclaiming Burial Practices and Restoring Our Tie to the Earth by Suzanne Kelly. Rowman and Littlefield, hardcover, paperback, e-book.

We once disposed of our dead in earth-friendly ways—no chemicals, biodegradable containers, dust to dust. But over the last 150 years death care has become a toxic, polluting, and alienating industry in the United States. Today, people are slowly waking up to the possibility of more sustainable and less disaffecting death care, reclaiming old practices in new ways, in a new age. Greening Death traces the philosophical and historical backstory to this awakening, captures the passionate on-the-ground work of the Green Burial Movement, and explores the obstacles and other challenges getting in the way of more robust mobilization. As the movement lays claim to greener, simpler, and more cost-efficient practices, something even more promising is being offered up—a tangible way of restoring our relationship to nature.



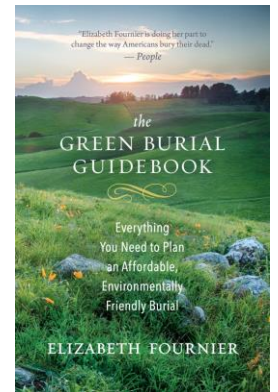
Reimagining Death: Stories and Practical Wisdom for Home Funerals and Green Burials by Lucinda Herring. North Atlantic, paperback, audiobook, e-book.

Natural, legal, and innovative after-death care options are transforming the paradigm of the existing funeral industry, helping families and communities recover their instinctive capacity to care for a loved one after death and do so in creative and healing ways. Reimagining Death offers stories and guidance for home funeral vigils, advance after-death care directives, green burials, and conscious dying. When we bring art and beauty, meaningful ritual, and joy to ease our loss and sorrow, we are greening the gateway of death and returning home to ourselves, to the wisdom of our bodies, and to the earth.



The Green Burial Guidebook: Everything You Need to Plan an Affordable, Environmentally Friendly Burial by Elizabeth Fournier. New World, paperback, e-book.

Funeral expenses in the United States average more than \$10,000. And every year conventional funerals bury millions of tons of wood, concrete, and metals, as well as millions of gallons of carcinogenic embalming fluid. There is a better way, and Elizabeth Fournier, affectionately dubbed the “Green Reaper,” walks you through it, step-by-step. She provides comprehensive and compassionate guidance, covering everything from green burial planning and home funeral basics to legal guidelines and outside-the-box options, such as burials at sea. Fournier points the way to green burial practices that consider both the environmental well-being of the planet and the economic well-being of loved ones.



Home Funeral Ceremonies: A primer to honor the dying and the dead with reverence, light-heartedness and grace by Kateyanne Unullisi, Donna Belk. Skull, paperback, e-book.

Home Funeral Guides and funeral celebrants, Donna Belk and Kateyanne Unullisi, have midwived the dying, the dead, and the grieving many times. They know how important and healing it is to intentionally mark a transitional time with ceremony and ritual. This simple yet powerful guidebook will help you with ceremonies to make the journey through a death — from being with the dying person, to preparing the body, vigil, leave-taking, disposition, and beyond. Weaving the practical with poetry and insight, these ceremonies guide with intention and clarity, to bring ritual into the room where death dwells.

Las Ceremonias Bonitas
Home Funeral
Ceremonies

A primer to honor the dying and the dead with reverence, light-heartedness and grace.

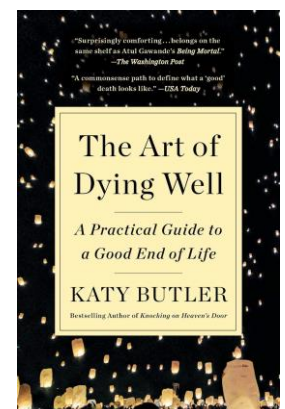


Donna Belk
Kateyanne Unullisi

BOOKS ON DEATH AND DYING

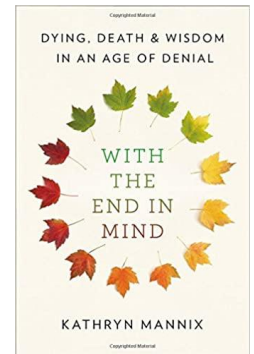
The Art of Dying Well: A Practical Guide to a Good End of Life by Katy Butler. Scribner, hardcover, paperback, audiobook, e-book.

“A common sense path to define what a ‘good’ death looks like” (USA TODAY), The Art of Dying Well is about living as well as possible for as long as possible and adapting successfully to change. Packed with extraordinarily helpful insights and inspiring true stories, award-winning journalist Katy Butler shows how to thrive in later life (even when coping with a chronic medical condition), how to get the best from our health system, and how to make your own “good death” more likely. Butler explains how to successfully age in place, why to pick a younger doctor and how to have an honest conversation with them, when not to call 911, and how to make your death a sacred rite of passage rather than a medical event. This handbook of preparations—practical, communal, physical, and spiritual—will help you make the most of your remaining time, be it decades, years, or months.



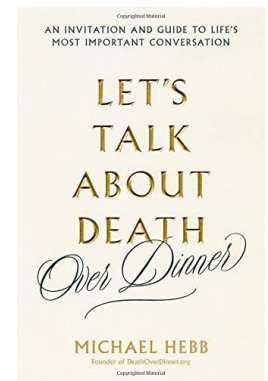
With the End in Mind: Dying, Death, and Wisdom in an Age of Denial by Kathryn Mannix. Little Brown, hardcover, paperback, audiobook, e-book.

Modern medical technology is allowing us to live longer and fuller lives than ever before. And for the most part, that is good news. But with changes in the way we understand medicine come changes in the way we understand death. Once a familiar, peaceful, and gentle -- if sorrowful -- transition, death has come to be something from which we shield our eyes, as we prefer to fight desperately against it rather than accept its inevitability. Dr. Kathryn Mannix has studied and practiced palliative care for thirty years. She shares beautifully crafted stories from a lifetime of caring for the dying, and makes a compelling case for the therapeutic power of approaching death not with trepidation, but with openness, clarity, and understanding.



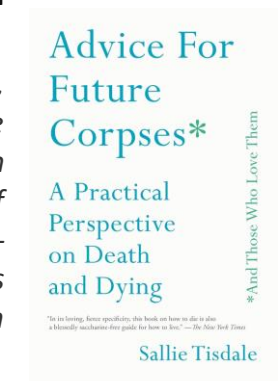
Let's Talk about Death (over Dinner): An Invitation and Guide to Life's Most Important Conversation by Michael Hebb. De Capo, hardcover, paperback, audiobook, e-book.

Offers keen practical advice on how to have these same conversations--not just at the dinner table, but anywhere. There's no one right way to talk about death, but Hebb shares time- and dinner- tested prompts to use as conversation starters, ranging from the spiritual to the practical, from analytical to downright funny and surprising. By transforming the most difficult conversations into an opportunity, they become celebratory and meaningful--ways that not only can change the way we die, but the way we live.



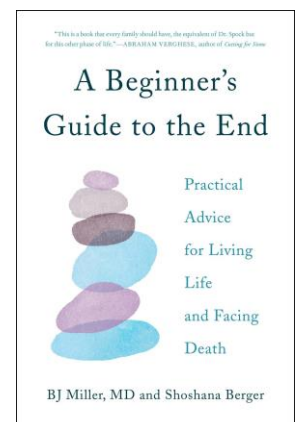
Advice for Future Corpses (and Those Who Love Them): A Practical Perspective on Death and Dying by Sallie Tisdale. Gallery, paperback, audiobook, e-book.

Informed by her many years working as a nurse, with more than a decade in palliative care, Tisdale provides a frank, direct, and compassionate meditation on the inevitable. From the sublime (the faint sound of Mozart as you take your last breath) to the ridiculous (lessons on how to close the sagging jaw of a corpse), Tisdale leads us through the peaks and troughs of death with a calm, wise, and humorous hand. Advice for Future Corpses is more than a how-to manual or a spiritual bible: it is a graceful compilation of honest and intimate anecdotes based on the deaths Tisdale has witnessed in her work and life, as well as stories from cultures, traditions, and literature around the world.



A Beginner's Guide to the End: Practical Advice for Living Life and Facing Death by Dr. BJ Miller and Shoshana Berger. Simon and Schuster, hardcover, paperback, audiobook, e-book.

"There is nothing wrong with you for dying," hospice physician B.J. Miller and journalist and caregiver Shoshana Berger write "Our ultimate purpose here isn't so much to help you die as it is to free up as much life as possible until you do." Theirs is a clear-eyed and big-hearted action plan for approaching the end of life, written to help readers feel more in control of an experience that so often seems anything but controllable. Their book offers everything from step-by-step instructions for how to do your paperwork and navigate the healthcare system to answers to questions you might be afraid to ask your doctor, like whether or not sex is still okay when you're sick. Get advice for how to break the news to your employer, whether to share old secrets with your family, how to face friends who might not be as empathetic as you'd hoped, and how to talk to your children about your will. There are also lessons for survivors, like how to shut down a loved one's

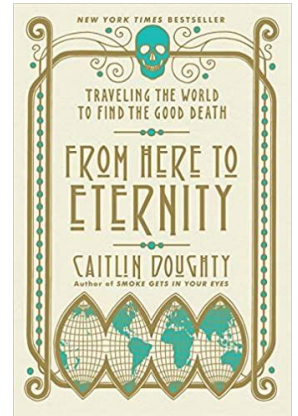


social media accounts, clean out the house, and write a great eulogy.

BOOKS BY LEADERS OF THE “RATIONAL DEATH MOVEMENT”

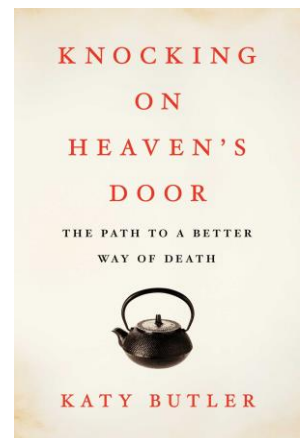
From Here to Eternity: Traveling the World to Find the Good Death by Caitlin Doughty. Norton, hardcover, paperback, audiobook, e-book.

*The best-selling author of **Smoke Gets in Your Eyes** expands our sense of what it means to treat the dead with "dignity." Doughty contends that the American funeral industry sells a particular—and, upon close inspection, peculiar—set of "respectful" rites: bodies are whisked to a mortuary, pumped full of chemicals, and entombed in concrete. She argues that our expensive, impersonal system fosters a corrosive fear of death that hinders our ability to cope and mourn. By comparing customs, she demonstrates that mourners everywhere respond best when they help care for the deceased, and have space to participate in the process.*



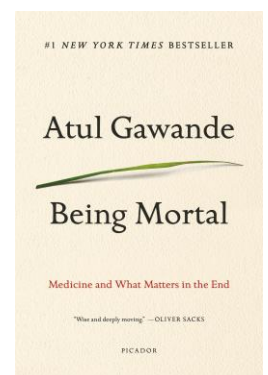
Knocking on Heaven's Door: The Path to a Better Way of Death by Katy Butler. Scribner, hardcover, audiobook, e-book.

Katy Butler was living thousands of miles from her vigorous and self-reliant parents when the call came: a crippling stroke had left her proud seventy-nine-year-old father unable to fasten a belt or complete a sentence. Butler joined the twenty-four million Americans helping shepherd parents through their final declines. With a reporter's skill and a daughter's love, Butler explores what happens when our terror of death collides with the technological imperatives of medicine. Her provocative thesis is that modern medicine, in its pursuit of maximum longevity, often creates more suffering than it prevents. This revolutionary blend of memoir and investigative reporting lays bare the tangled web of technology, medicine, and commerce that dying has become. And it chronicles the rise of Slow Medicine, a new movement trying to reclaim the "Good Deaths" our ancestors prized.



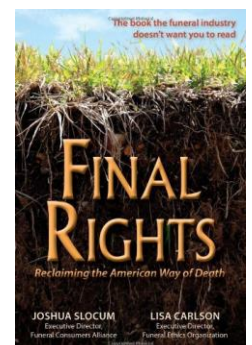
Being Mortal: Medicine and What Matters in the End by Atul Gawande. Picador, paperback, audiobook, e-book.

*Through eye-opening research and gripping stories of his own patients and family, Gawande reveals the suffering this dynamic has produced. Nursing homes, devoted above all to safety, battle with residents over the food they are allowed to eat and the choices they are allowed to make. Doctors, uncomfortable discussing patients' anxieties about death, fall back on false hopes and treatments that are actually shortening lives instead of improving them. Named a Best Book of the Year by *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times Book Review*, *NPR*, and *Chicago Tribune*, now in paperback with a new reading group guide.*



Final Rights: Reclaiming the American Way of Death by Lisa Carlson and Joshua Slocum. Funeral Consumers Alliance, paperback and e-book.

The two most prominent leaders of the funeral consumer movement are the authors of this book: Joshua Slocum, executive director of Funeral Consumers Alliance, and Lisa Carlson, executive director of Funeral Ethics Organization. Here they join forces to expose

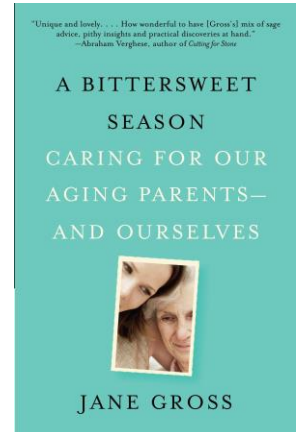


wrongdoing, inform consumers of their rights, and propose legal reforms. The book includes state-by-state summaries of laws, regulations, services, and consumer concerns.

BOOKS FOR CAREGIVERS

A Bittersweet Season: Caring for Our Aging Parents--and Ourselves by Jane Gross. Vintage, paperback, audio book, e-book.

When Jane Gross found herself suddenly thrust into a caretaker role for her eighty-five year-old mother, she was forced to face challenges that she had never imagined. As she and her younger brother struggled to move her mother into an assisted living facility, deal with seemingly never-ending costs, and adapt to the demands on her time and psyche, she learned valuable and important lessons. Here, the longtime New York Times expert on the subject of elderly care and the founder of the New Old Age blog shares her frustrating, heartbreaking, enlightening, and ultimately redemptive journey, providing us along the way with valuable information that she wishes she had known earlier. We learn why finding a general practitioner with a specialty in geriatrics should be your first move when relocating a parent; how to deal with Medicaid and Medicare; how to understand and provide for your own needs as a caretaker; and much more.



Awake at the Bedside: Contemplative Teachings on Palliative and End-of-Life Care ed. by Koshin Paley Ellison, Matt Weingast. Wisdom, paperback, e-book.

Pioneers of palliative and end-of-life care as well as doctors, chaplains, caregivers and even poets offer wisdom that will challenge, uplift, comfort—and change the way we think about death. Equal parts instruction manual and spiritual testimony, it includes specific instructions and personal accounts to inspire, counsel, and teach. An indispensable resource for anyone involved in hospice work or caregiving of any kind.

